

**Idaho Fish and Game Commission  
Special Meeting  
August 7-8, 2006  
Boise, Idaho**

**August 7, 2006**

Commissioners Wheeler, McDermott, Irby, Barowsky, Wright, Budge and Power were present.

Chairman Wheeler welcomed new Southwest Commissioner Bob Barowsky and Southeast Commissioner Randy Budge.

Bob Barowsky was born and raised in Idaho and currently lives in Fruitland. He served as a Payette County Sheriff from 1980 and retired in 2004.

Randy Budge was raised on a cattle ranch in Eastern Idaho along the Bear River. He attended school in Soda Springs and did his undergraduate work at Utah State with a degree in finance and economics. Commissioner Budge attended law school at the University of Idaho and graduated in 1976. He currently practices law in Pocatello. He enjoys upland bird and waterfowl hunting and is an avid fisherman.

Chairman Wheeler introduced Ray Houston, Budget Analyst, Legislative Services Office; Roger Phillips from the *Idaho Statesman*; and Doug Schleis, *Wild Idaho News*.

**FY08 Budget Workshop**

Jim Lau, Chief, Bureau of Administration briefed Commissioners on the Department's Budget. He stated that the Department does not receive any state general fund revenue. The Department has only two sources of funds; 1) license buyers and, 2) federal and private sources, that involve grants, contracts or designated spending. The discussion for today will relate to the License part of the Budget.

Mr. Lau provided a handout to Commissioners on the Cost of a Resident Combination License (Appendix 39, Exhibit 85). The handout compares the actual cost of a Fish and Game combination license and the consumer price index over the last 25 years. It shows that during that time period the increase of the cost of a license has matched inflation. You can see that there were no additional funds available for additional programs.

In the past the Department had gone for extended periods of time without a fee increase. Then a fee increase is granted by the Legislature and it was for a larger dollar amount. In the last couple of years the Legislature had given the Department guidance that they would prefer that we ask more frequently and for smaller increases. The last fee increase

was in FY06 effective July 1, 2005. The Department is considering whether to ask for a fee increase for FY08 to begin in July 1, 2007 in accordance with Legislative guidance to come back more frequently and request a smaller increase.

Mr. Lau stated that when the Department received our last increase the Department had requested a 14% increase which was what the Department felt it needed to operate and get projects completed. However, the Legislature granted a 10% fee increase.

Mr. Lau provided a handout on the License Sales History (Appendix 39 Exhibit 86) The Department has done a decent job on the resident license sales and it has shown an increase in the last couple of years with the nonresident license declining slightly. He stated that this is typical of what you will see in Fish and Game operations across the country. What we are faced with is a stagnant customer base and our costs are increasing every year. The question is how we want to approach this issue because it will continue to get worse. The Department has worked with outside groups including the Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation to increase license sales, and the recruitment and retention of anglers. Efforts are aimed at trying to get kids back fishing and encouraged lapsed anglers to get back into the sport. The last couple of years the Department has targeted efforts at increasing the retention rate in Idaho with some success.

### **Economic Impact to Idaho**

Roger Fuhrman stated that hunting, fishing and wildlife watching is big business in Idaho. The USFWS conducts a national survey every five years on the economic impact and participation of hunting, fishing and wildlife viewing around the country. Facts from this survey include:

- Wildlife based recreation in 2001 in Idaho contributed \$955 million in retail sales.
- 20,000 jobs related
- Wages and salaries \$ 400 million tied to hunting, fishing and related out door recreation
- \$50 million sales and fuel tax

Mr. Fuhrman stated that an indication of how important hunting, fishing and wildlife recreation is to Idaho includes the addition of two major sporting chains Cabelas and G.I. Joes decision to open new stores in Boise because of the interest in outdoor recreation in Idaho.

Mr. Lau distributed hand outs (Appendix 39 Exhibit 87) Cost to Fish and the Cost to Hunt comparing Idaho to other Western states.

### **Alternative Funding**

Mr. Lau reported that 2/3 of the Western states currently accept some type of alternative funding.

Options that other states have looked at or adopted for alternative funding include:

- Fees on off road vehicles

- Sales tax
- Lotteries
- Impact fees on development
- Drivers license fee
- WMA fees

Mr. Lau quoted from an audit report that was done for the state of Wisconsin talking about funding sources. Wisconsin faces the same funding source issues as Idaho and many other states. The article stated that 34 states have used 25 other miscellaneous funding sources to supplement their fish and wildlife programs. Some examples are:

- Arizona collected \$1.8 million in hunter ed fees
- Texas collected \$100,000 from the sale of confiscated goods
- Arizona, Iowa, Nebraska, Oregon and Wyoming receive an average of \$3.5 million in state lottery profits for fish and wildlife activities

Policy makers in other states have considered a variety of alternative funding strategies to supplement traditional funding for fish and wildlife:

- Maine is considering implementing a fee for outdoor recreation users such as canoe and kayakers
- Pennsylvania is considering allocating a portion of its landfill tipping fees to fish and wildlife programs
- South Carolina is considering requiring an additional permit for taking certain bass and trout species

Washington has a successful program that charges a fee to non sportsmen to access the Wildlife Management Areas.

Commission discussion followed regarding ideas and suggestions for alternative funding sources. The Commission realizes that alternative funding will be needed in the future to continue providing services related to fish and wildlife to the state of Idaho. Chairman Wheeler asked for volunteers for a Commissioner subcommittee to look at alternative funding and to research options that the Department could look at in the future. Chairman Wheeler stated that this is a complicated issue and a well thought out plan is needed. Director Huffaker stated that that the Department is not asking for a solution at this time, but wanted to make Commissioners aware of the situation and the need for alternative funding in the future.

### **Idaho State Budget Process**

Chairman Wheeler introduced Maria Barratt, Financial Management Analyst Sr., from the Department of Financial Management (DFM), the Department's new budget analyst.

Jim Lau reviewed the Idaho State Budget Process (Appendix 39, Exhibit 88). Mr. Lau stated that this is the process that the Department follows when preparing and submitting the budget. Staff is currently working on the FY08 Budget which begins July 1, 2007.

Guidelines for the budget are to bring a budget before the JFAC and the Governor that is in balance based on the Department's current revenues. The FY08 Budget will not assume any fee increase. Adjustments have been made to incorporate the increases for last years salary increases, projected salary and inflationary increases for next year as well as reduced spending in other areas to accommodate those mandated increases.

Mr. Lau stated that if the Commission gives direction to the Department and the sportsmen support a fee increase the Department would develop a separate trailer bill for a fee increase and ask the Legislature for a fee increase.

Ms. Barratt stated that all the agencies have two budget analysts. The budgets for self funded agencies for FY08 will be mostly maintenance budgets as directed by the Governor which means there will not be a lot of enhancements. After September 1, Ms. Barratt reviews Department budgets and asks questions so that she understands each agency budget in preparation for her explanation to the Governor in October. The Governor must first present a balanced budget. DFM must figure out cuts, etc. before he presents the budget to the Legislature.

Ray Houston, Legislative Services Office (LSO) stated that Cathy Holland-Smith replaced Jeff Youtz as Director of the Legislative Budget Office. Mr. Youtz is now the Director of Legislative Services. Mr. Houston stated that he has had the Fish and Game assignment for about six years. He stated that it is very important to keep the communication lines open with the Legislature. As you meet with your local Legislators keep them informed of Department plans early in the process.

Commissioners discussed means of communicating with Legislators in each of their regions. Chairman Wheeler stated that there are several Legislative activities planned in each region. He stressed the importance for the Commission being involved in the political process and the relationship and trust with the Legislators.

### **Fee Increase Strategy**

Director Huffaker stated that Department Bureau Chiefs and Regional Supervisors met and put together a strategy in the form of a power point presentation explaining the Department's budget and the need for a fee increase proposal. Director Huffaker stated that this information will be presented to sportsmen's groups and clubs around the state by each Regional Supervisor and selected Bureau Chiefs. The object of the presentation is to "demystify" the budget and explain the financial status of the Department along with the realities of inflation that the Department is facing.

Director Huffaker stated that the Department Budget is due to DFM on September 1<sup>st</sup>. The Department has listened to the Legislature and stayed within expected revenue. This preliminary budget balances revenue and spending and reflects a 7% cut from license funded projects.

Roger Furman, Communications Chief, presented the power point presentation on the Department's budget and the need for a fee increase to Commissioners, just as it was, proposed to be presented to sportsmen and various organizations.

Commission discussion followed and Commissioners gave their input and suggestions regarding the presentation. Mr. Fuhrman stated he will incorporate the Commission suggestions and ideas in the presentation.

Commissioners agreed that the Department needs a fee increase to continue services. The Commission wants to be heard as one voice that all agree the Department needs a fee increase to continue services at the current level and does not want to see a reduction of services.

The Commission will take the leadership role in taking the fee increase to the Legislature. The Commission instructed the Department to pursue a license buyer supported fee increase concept and submit a budget reflecting the cuts as indicated in power point presentation.

### **Miscellaneous**

Adjournment 4:25 p.m.

### **Public Meeting**

Chairman Wheeler called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. Introductions of Commission members and staff followed. Chairman Wheeler introduced Representative Bert Stevenson, Chairman of the House and Resource Committee.

Tom Hemker, Wildlife Biologist gave a short briefing on Department recommendations for the waterfowl season.

Jim Struckman, Boise said the he was the Architect for the MK Nature Center. He has not seen much information on the new Headquarters building proposal. He feels that someone needs to represent the Nature Center and make sure that what ever is built next door to the Nature Center has sympathy for it, and does not tear it all up.

Glen Dodge, representing Idaho Waterfowl Association, said that they support the Idaho Fish and Game recommendations for the waterfowl season. The group would like to suggest an exploration of an early goose season to reduce the resident goose populations around urban areas. The Idaho Waterfowl Association has suggestions on how to ensure a safe and effective reduction in urban geese and would look forward to assisting Fish and Game with this.

Bert Bowler, Boise, Mr. Bowler supports the Department's need for a new headquarters facility that accommodates the employees, including the infrastructure upgrades that will be necessary to meet future growth. He is concerned with the Department's image in

continuing to promote high standards and stewardship in the habitat protection. He does not feel the Department has done an adequate job of assessing the impact of the proposed headquarters building on the Nature Center. His overarching concern is preserving the integrity of the Nature Center which along with the Boise River is truly a gem of the Treasure Valley. He would like for the Department to work with the users and supporters of the Nature Center about the Departments need for a new building with solid green credentials that fully protect the surrounding environments. Mr. Bowler stated that the Department may be surprised at what support may be out there, to include support for a fee increase. These folks may not all be licensed buyers, but they represent one of the largest populations in the state which is Ada and Canyon counties. As a former Department employee he is concerned that the Department may be missing an opportunity to do the best it can to fulfill its mission for the future.

Bob Minter, Boise, representing the Ada County Fish and Game League. He encourages the staff working on the building plans for a new headquarters building to contact Idaho Energy Division and talk to them about their green certification program. The Ada County Fish and Game League has been around since the 1920's, and is part of the group that helped form this Commission in 1938 initiative. The league is an affiliate of the Idaho Wildlife Federation and is a member of the ISCAC. Mr. Minter is currently the vice president of ISCAC and Mark Bell is the president. Mr. Minter welcomed the new Commissioners. An invitation was extended for the Commissioners to attend the September 14<sup>th</sup> fish fry sponsored by the League. The members of the League oppose high fence hunting in the state and the Land Board's consideration of using state endowment lands to go to game farm operators.

Milton Coffman, Boise, would like for the Commission to consider a split season of either a Wednesday and Thursday or a Tuesday and Wednesday sometime in the later part of October or the early part of November to give the blue collar worker the last weekend to hunt waterfowl. Mr. Coffman would like to see the hunting preserve in Hagerman reopened to seniors, youth and handicapped hunters and would like to see an early teal season.

Harry Young, Boise, is a volunteer for the MKNC and other community organizations. Mr. Young has been a volunteer for the MKNC for 8 years and has done everything from pulling weeds, to replacing fish viewing windows, to escorting students on educational tours and assisting with Salmon and Steelhead days. He is worried about the height of the new building proposal being constructed along the west side of the Nature Center. He realizes that the Department needs a new building to support their needs and I support this but not at the expense of the Nature Center. There must be another location for the Department to build a new building.

Pete Ellesworth, Concerned Sportsmen of Idaho submitted a letter dated August 6, 2006 to the Commission regarding the Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the relationship with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game.

Adjournment 7:30 p.m.

## **August 8, 2006**

### **Opening Comments**

Chairman Wheeler welcomed Representative Bert Stevenson.

### **Agenda Changes**

Change agenda items 7 and 8. Representative Stevenson will speak first.

### **Review of Public Comment**

Commissioner Power summarized the public comments noting most comments were quite similar. He stated there was only one waterfowl comment asking for an additional early goose hunt which is regulated by federal frame work and would not be an option for the Commission. Most other comments were pertaining to the Headquarters building proposal. There was support for a new building but a number of concerns on the proposed location for the building. Other comments were individuals opposed to high fenced hunting and game farming. Commissioner Wright will work with Regional Supervisor Dave Parrish about the area in Hagerman currently closed because of lead shot and now we have steel shot.

### **Commission Reports**

#### **Southeast Region:**

Commissioner Budge reported that it has been a good water year so the fisheries are in better shape than in previous years. A domestic elk ranch is proposed by Rulon Jones in the Cedar Creek drainage. Commissioner Budge reported that the proposal to include State land was tabled by the Department of Lands for the time being. There is a proposal by the Twin Lakes Canal Company in the Preston area to build a new dam site on the Bear River which is downstream from the Onida Reservoir. This area is in a high recreation area and is part of the Yellowstone cutthroat recovery area. The Department is monitoring the proposal and will submit comments. The pelican and cormorant populations are growing and having a predation effect that is adverse on fisheries primarily on the Blackfoot River drainage. The Department is trying to preserve cutthroat and is monitoring and evaluating the problem.

#### **Southwest Region:**

Commissioner Barowsky reported on the work the regional staff has been conducting on the environmental issues with Ada County. There are 20 subdivisions planned in the Canyon Ada area. The Department is doing a good job assessing the environmental needs of these areas. The McCall Fishery staff has planted over 900,000 yellow perch in the Cascade Reservoir. Idaho Walleye Unlimited has asked for a study to be conducted on Lake Lowell. The Region has secured 178, 000 acres for Access Yes and much of it

was accomplished in cooperation Western Pacific Timber. The range is from Idaho City into New Meadow areas.

#### Salmon Region:

Commissioner Power stated the he has observed on his river trips that bighorn sheep look to be in good condition and the lamb production is very healthy in the Salmon region.

#### Clearwater Region:

Commissioner Irby officially commended Director Huffaker, Steve Barton, Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation and FNAWS for their efforts to acquire the Redbird Canyon property. He understands that it may be accomplished or being wrapped up. Director Huffaker stated the closing is scheduled for the end of the month. Commissioner Irby has asked the Regional staff to prepare a field trip to Redbird for the November meeting. The Jack O'Connor Center has been dedicated and is up and running with a Director. He would like for Commissioners to visit the facility during the November meeting if there is time. The green field hunts have started and seem to be off to a good start. The Director and Commissioner will fly with Senator Crapo's Back Country tour of the Clearwater National Forest. The Myrtle Beach access with BLM has been accomplished with a passing and turning lane put in. On August 11<sup>th</sup> there will be an organized access seminar in Orofino sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce. The discussion will include access with ATV's. Commission discussion followed regarding the Commission ATV subcommittee. Director Huffaker stated that the Department is very much engaged with Transportation and Parks & Recreation. Commissioner Barowsky will work on the ATV issue in the Southwest Region and work with Commissioner Irby on the subcommittee.

#### Magic Valley Region:

Commissioner Wright reported that the Region is conducting bighorn sheep counts. The numbers in the Bruneau and Jabridge area show a 10 % increase compared to three years ago. Antelope counts are down in Camas County. Three deer poaching cases were identified in the Region. The cases are still ongoing because of other charges found during the investigation. West Nile Virus is a concern in Twin Falls and the Magic Valley areas. The Region is receiving 5-10 magpies daily at the regional office. The Region will start sampling sage grouse at check stations.

#### Panhandle Region:

Commissioner McDermott reported that the Lake Pend Oreille predator suppression control project been in place for 3 months and 6,500 fish have been harvested. Seventy percent of these fish are lake trout. The goal is to take out 15,000 predator fish before the end of the year. Dr. Mike Hanson from the University of Wisconsin is on sabbatical and will be working with the Department for one year. He is one of the leading experts on lake trout. Dr. Hanson will assist on the lake trout issue on Lake Pend Oreille. The Farragut Range hearing is currently set for August 28<sup>th</sup>.

#### Upper Snake Region:

Commissioner Wheeler reported that the regional staff did a great job hosting the float trip at the July Commission meeting. It gave the other Commissioners a chance to see the



River and problems associated with it. One of those problems is that 10,000 people go down the Middlefork a year and 200,000 going down the Southfork. The August 24<sup>th</sup> Legislative meeting has been postponed, a new date will be determined. This meeting will give the region an opportunity to share information with the Legislators on what is going on in the Upper Snake Region.

### **Consent Calendar**

**06-57** Commissioner Irby moved and Commissioner Power seconded a motion **TO APPROVE THE CONSENT CALENDAR INCLUDING THE MINUTES OF THE JUNE 22, 2006 MEETING.** The motion carried in an unanimous vote.

## **RULES**

### **Waterfowl Regulations**

Tom Hemker, Wildlife Biologist presented a power point presentation (Appendix 39, Exhibit 89) to the Commission related to the status of waterfowl. He gave a short briefing on the waterfowl process. It is a fairly complex process when you are trying to get the other states, the Fish and Wildlife Service and Tribes to go in the same direction on an annual basis.

Most of the waterfowl harvested in Idaho are produced in Canada. Waterfowl nesting conditions in these breeding areas are good in 2006. The pond index increased 14% from 3.92 million in 2005 to 4.45 million in 2006. The number of mallards in these areas increased 8% from 6.76 to 7.28 million birds. Southern Alberta is especially important for breeding waterfowl that come to Idaho during the hunting season. Breeding mallards in southern Alberta are up 34% and southern Alberta ponds are up 33%.

Idaho's waterfowl season is set within a framework determined by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in late July after meeting with all state fish and wildlife agencies. The 2006-07 final frameworks for Idaho will be provided to the Department on July 28, 2006 and will almost certainly be 107 days for both ducks and geese between September 23, 2006 and January 28, 2007.

A statewide press release and radio spot will be issued on these proposed seasons. Each region will hold an open house. Idaho Ducks Unlimited and the Idaho Waterfowl Association were sent these season proposals by e-mail and they forwarded them to their membership. A notice asking for input was posted on the Department's web site. Several avid waterfowl hunters were emailed the season proposals at their request.

A process called Adaptive Harvest Management (AHM) determines the general duck season framework. This process was adopted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1996 and is used to annually evaluate duck habitat and populations and select the optimal season framework for US duck seasons. Special harvest strategies are used for some of the less common ducks. Goose seasons are determined by flyway management plans for each goose population. Spring goose pair counts are the key parameter for selecting

Canada goose seasons. Data collected in 2006 show that breeding habitat conditions and populations are at levels that can support a 107-day season for all waterfowl except possibly scaup. The maximum days allowed by framework can be taken with no long-term impacts on Idaho's waterfowl resource. Opening the season one week earlier in northern and eastern Idaho allows more hunting opportunity in the higher and colder climates of northern and eastern Idaho.

The Department's recommendation is to take the maximum allowed hunt days and bags allowed by federal framework with two zones. This proposed season length is nearly identical to last year with the only difference being a full 107-day season for canvasbacks. The proposed duck and goose bags would be unchanged.

- **Youth Hunt (Statewide)**
  - September 30 and October 1
  - Licensed youth aged 15 and under
- **Northern and Eastern Idaho Zone**
  - Panhandle, Clearwater, Southeast, Upper Snake, and Salmon regions.
  - Geese and ducks October 7 to January 19.
  - Coots and snipe: October 7 to January 19.
- **Southwestern Zone**
  - Southwest and Magic Valley regions
  - Geese, ducks October 14 to January 26.
  - Coots and snipe: October 14 to January 26.

Mr. Hemker stated that regarding the request at the public hearing to have an early teal season, the Commission would have to take days off the regular season to accommodate this request.

**06-58** Commissioner Irby moved and Commissioner Power seconded a motion **TO ACCEPT THE DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATIONS ON WATERFOWL REGULATIONS FOR 2006-2007**. The motion carried in an unanimous vote.

Mr. Hemker gave a brief update on avian influenza. The first press release will be sent out today outlining what Idaho will be doing for sampling waterfowl. There are 144 types of avian influenza. The type that people are concerned about is H5N1 and it has not been documented in the U.S. Alaska has been conducting bird sampling for the past couple of months and out of 7,000 bird samples they are all zeros. The Federal government has decided this is an important issue and has provided funding to the states to assist in the sampling migratory birds. Idaho will sample approximately 2,000 birds this fall. The Department will collect 400-500 samples from live birds before the duck season opens in early September.

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

### **Comments to the Commission by Representative Bert Stevenson**

Chairman Wheeler introduced Representative Bert Stevenson. Representative Stevenson stated he appreciated the opportunity to be here today. He stated that he has five items he would like to cover. As a member of the Legislature, it is our desire that the Commission take the lead in making major policy decisions. As Chairman of the House Committee with oversight for the Department, he recognizes the Commission and the important role they serve.

#### **Grey Wolf:**

The Legislature had hoped that things would have moved along faster than it has on getting this species delisted. He suggested the Commission try to put some pressure on the federal agencies to speed up this process. He would like to see something happen before the Legislative session starts. He suggested a meeting with Governor Risch to discuss.

Director Huffaker stated that Governor Risch has met with the Governor of Montana and the Director of Fish and Wildlife Service on wolf management. He stated that it was a very productive discussion. The next priority for Natural Resources issues is to make some head way on wolf management.

#### **Budget:**

Representative Stevenson understands that costs and expenses are going up and there may be a need for an increase in the budget. The item which the Legislators hear the most complaints on is the increase cost for the senior license. He suggested the Commission include the two committee chairs when setting the fees and insuring that they are aware of what the fees will be. He cautioned the Commission to not let the plans for a new headquarters building be connected with the fee increase.

#### **News Media:**

Representative Stevenson referenced the articles on the breaching of the four Snake River dams in the media recently. He does not want to see what happened in the past with dam breaching happen again.

#### **Relationships:**

Commissioners have an opportunity to spend time with the Legislators in their area. He stated that when a constituent calls him with questions and he does not have the information to answer the question he can call his Regional Supervisor and Commissioner from his area and they will take care of it for him. He feels that when the Region meets with the legislators it strengthens the relationship and it insures they are informed on the issues facing the Department.

Commissioner Wheeler thanked Representative Stevenson for his comments and suggestions to the Commission.

### **Hunter Ed Instructor Awards**

Dan Papp, Regional Wildlife Educator from the Southwest Region and Chairman Wheeler presented the “Commissioner’s Award – Continuing the Hunting Heritage” awards to the following individuals:

Mike Matthews – Weiser  
Robert Lytle – Boise  
Walt Rost – Homedale  
Art Smith – Mountain Home  
Ed Fowler – Caldwell (not present)

## **FISCAL**

### **FY08 Budget Follow Up Questions**

Jim Lau, Chief of Administration

Long Term Strategic Goals:

The Department and Commission will seek alternative funding but the time is not right today. Further study is needed and the Department and Commission will continue to look at this issue for a long term solution. For purpose of the FY08 Budget and proposed fee increase, the Department will not look at alternative funding for a revenue source at the current time.

Mr. Lau stated that the FY08 Budget was presented well by Roger Fuhrman, and the suggested changes to the presentation were made. Mr. Lau asked for the Commission’s approval for the budget of \$70,666,000 plus the impact of the CEC and inflation adjustments. He noted those were the numbers that were presented yesterday and are reflective of the cuts that were discussed at the workshop. The numbers include \$500,000 for the licensing system, CEC salary and wages adjustments for 2007, anticipated salary and inflation adjustments for 2008. This budget does not include: any increased rent for the proposed headquarters building. If the new building stays on schedule a rent payment would not be required until FY2009.

The FY 2008 budget does include: \$430,000 one time money that is related to the new building and would include a \$50,000 moving cost, \$250,000 for office furniture and fixtures, and \$130,000 Information Technology infrastructure. Mr. Lau stated the \$430,000 would be funded by onetime revenues from the sale of excess land and buildings, set aside in a stabilization fund for these one time expenditures.

The Commission noted its support for the Department to pursue a fee increase needed to raise approximately \$4 million to carry the Department through FY09 – FY10. The Department will solicit the input and support of sportsmen and then take steps to prepare the needed legislation to define the fee increase further and take to the Legislature.

**06-59** Commissioner Power moved and Commissioner Wright seconded a motion **TO ACCEPT THE PRELIMINARY BUDGET NUMBER OF \$72,516,000 PRESENTED BY THE DEPARTMENT.** The motion carried in an unanimous vote.

Chairman Wheeler stated that the motion will allow the Department to move forward. Mr. Lau will give the Commission a more refined version of the budget summary as soon as practical. Staff will make the salary and inflation adjustments and put the proposed FY08 Budget in format for the Legislature and Governor's Office. He asked Mr. Lau to provide the Commission with a final copy by September 1<sup>st</sup>.

#### **Fee Increase Proposal**

Chairman Wheeler stated he would like for the Commission to give guidance to the Director on how to proceed with the 12% fee increase proposal.

Director Huffaker stated that the normal procedure for the Governor's office is that they do not want any surprises and need to be informed of Department budget proposals. The Director wanted to have this discussion with the Commission before taking it to the Governor's office. Director Huffaker's recommendation is to forward to the Governor the idea that the Department may be seeking a fee increase and ask him to give the Department permission to put a placeholder in the process based on the discussions yet to be had with sportsmen about how much and how to raise the money.

Chairman Wheeler asked for a motion giving formal direction to the Director on how to accomplish this task and that the Commission is in agreement with this approach.

Director Huffaker read the following recommendation to the Commission.

The Department Recommendation is:

The Department has developed an FY08 budget which balances revenue and expenditure in compliance with Legislative direction. This budget results in a 7% cut to license services because the FY06 license increase did not fully cover inflationary costs and infrastructure needs beyond FY07. The Department estimates an additional \$4 million will be required by FY10 to maintain services at FY07 levels and support inflationary and compensation costs, new license sales system, and the near term cost of leasing office space for headquarters. This amount is equivalent to a 12 % increase in the cost of licenses and tags but a specific fee package has not been developed. The Fish and Game Commission has directed the Department to seek input from sportsmen for their support and ideas for a fee adjustment package to maintain services. This idea is a placeholder for the Legislative amendment to 36416 and associated sections to increase license fees.

After Commission discussion, the following motion was made.

**06-60** Commissioner Wright and Commissioner Barowsky seconded a motion **THAT BECAUSE OF A PROJECTED \$ 4 MILLION DEFICIT BY 2010 IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT A FEE INCREASE IN THE RANGE OF 12% BE**

**ADDED TO LICENSE AND TAG SALES. DETAILS OF THIS NEW BUDGET WILL BE OUTLINED BY THE DEPARTMENT AND REVIEWED BY THE COMMISSION IN A TIMELY FASHION.** The motion carried in an unanimous vote.

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

### **Headquarters Building Project**

Director Huffaker suggested that Department not tie a fee increase to plans for a new headquarters building project at this time. He stated that there was some valuable testimony given at the August 7<sup>th</sup> public hearing regarding the building proposal. The people in Boise are passionate about the Nature Center. It is a big draw to the community. Director Huffaker would like to take the time to make this building project better and more acceptable to more people. Over the next 25 years the Department is going to need new office facilities whether we build or lease the buildings. He is confident that through the Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation we can do a much better and cheaper job for the sportsmen of providing the same kind of facilities. The timing may not be right at this time. Director Huffaker's recommendation is to defer the construction in the short term.

Commission discussion followed. Chairman Wheeler stated that he would like to ensure that the public is fully informed of the plans and process for a new headquarters building and would like to delay the process for one year. Chairman Wheeler agrees that it is not a good idea to pursue a fee increase and a building project at the same time.

**06-61** Commissioner Irby moved and Commissioner Wright seconded a motion **THAT THE COMMISSION IS IN AGREEMENT THAT THE DEPARTMENT NEEDS A NEW HEADQUARTERS BUILDING AND THAT IT SHOULD BE PUT OFF FOR ONE YEAR BECAUSE OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES DISCUSSED REGARDING THE FEE INCREASE PROPOSAL AND PROVIDING INFORMATION TO THE PUBLIC ON DETAILS FOR THE BUILDING PLANS.** The motion carried in an unanimous vote.

## **REPORTS**

### **Access Yes Pilot Project Survey**

Jeff Gould, Upland Game Manager, gave a preamble to Ms. Drewsen's presentation on Access Yes. Mr. Gould stated that over the last four years the Department has expended a great deal of effort on improving habitat on private land and that the habitat improvement program has been in place since 1985. Over the last four years the program has been leveraged into a Farm Bill coordination position. This is where the Department put staff members in NRCS offices and using their projects and our staff members to implement habitat projects on private lands. It has been extremely successful.

Karla Drewsen, Private Lands Staff Biologist, gave a power point presentation to the Commission on Access Yes! Pilot Project (Appendix 39, Exhibit 90). Ms. Drewsen has taken over the coordination of the Access Yes Program from Brad Compton.

The Idaho Fish and Game Compass reaffirms the direction that the Department is going with the Access Yes Program; and sets the primary goals of improving habitat and access to meet the demands for fish and wildlife recreation. The Access Yes Program began in 2003 and the landowner's interest continues to grow. The interest is exceeding current funding. The Department is looking for different ways to expand the program using more than just dollars as incentives to landowners who are willing to enroll in the program.

By starting with the Pilot Project in the Magic Valley and focusing on that Region, the Department hopes to address some issues specifically, that will effect the program statewide. The Magic Valley Region has the largest Landowner Appreciation Program (LAP). There are 280 farms and ranches enrolled and 700,000 private acres in the program. The Region also has the largest Access Yes Program.

**The objectives for the Magic Valley Pilot Project:**

- To identify the incentives that will work for the MV landowners.
- To assess statewide sportsmen support for those incentives.

**Timeline:**

- August 2006 Finalize Survey
- September-October conduct surveys
- Brief local legislative members
- November 2006 present the Department recommendation to the Commission
- January 2007 Rule changes as needed

**Survey Objectives:**

- Establish a benchmark for the program to determine what opportunities currently exist on private land
- Propose and investigate what other incentives to encourage the Magic Valley landowners to enroll in Access Yes!
- Since Access to both public and private ground is limited and likely to become more so in the future, determine what will motivate landowners to sign up for long-term contracts with Access Yes!

**Potential List of Voluntary Incentives:**

- Financial compensation
- Possible tax deductions
- License and tags, personal and transferable
- Department services , habitat projects, sportsmen involvement projects, and hunter services such as patrolling property

After providing the summary of the Access Yes! Pilot Project – Landowner Draft Survey (Appendix 39, Exhibit 91), Ms. Drewsen reported that staff are waiting for professional input on some of the questions.

Ms. Drewsen reported that the Department is working hard to find other funding sources. They were able to secure a National Shooting Sports Foundation Grant for the Access Yes! based on securing long term and public access.

She reported that Secretary of Interior Dirk Kempthorne announced that Idaho has been awarded \$946,000 for the Landowner Incentive Program. The funds are earmarked for Pulose Prairie, Henry's Fork and Bear River projects.

Director Huffaker referenced other activities related to the Farm Bill. The state of Idaho just entered into the CREP project in the Magic Valley Region to solve water problems and create bird habitat. The Department is making progress in not only with wildlife conservation but landowner relations through the Farm Bill programs. The Director is very proud of the staff for their efforts and Ms. Drewsen for getting the work done.

#### **Grouse National Priority Area for the Conservation Reserve Program**

Director Huffaker presented a draft letter to Senator Crapo (Appendix 39, Exhibit 92) for Commission approval regarding support of the sage and Columbian sharp-tailed grouse National Priority Area (NPA) proposal for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). He said that CRP is a huge deal for wildlife in Idaho. CRP is the reason that sharp-tailed grouse are not listed as threatened species. The Department is doing everything they can to keep the conservation money on the ground not just for endangered species benefit, but also as an integral part of our Mule Deer Initiative. The states of Idaho and Washington in this letter are proposing to give a few more points in the CRP sign up to process those landowners who are in the range of sharp-tailed and sage grouse. It will not only benefit those species and farmers but will also help mule deer and non game wildlife. Senator Crapo has been very receptive to wildlife conservation.

**06-62** Commissioner Power moved and Commissioner Wright seconded a motion **TO ACCEPT THE DRAFT AND SEND THE LETTER TO SENATOR CRAPO**. The motion carried in an unanimous vote.

#### **Wrap Up**

Director Huffaker extended an invitation to the Commissioners from the Colorado Wildlife Commission to attend an All Commissioner meeting in Snowmass, Colorado at the AFWA meeting September 19<sup>th</sup>. The purpose of the meeting is to share ideas, issues and perspectives that all of the western states are facing.

#### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 11:45 am.

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Cameron Wheeler  
Chairman

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Terry M. Mansfield  
Secretary